
The UN has despatched a convoy carrying specialist aid deliveries across the frontline in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The teams will assess the needs of people displaced by fighting. Our correspondent Peter Greste is travelling with them:

The road north of Goma is at first **choked with** people - those forced to run from their homes over the past weeks by fighting between the rebel Commander Laurent Nkunda and Congolese government forces and their allied militias. But as the road progresses, the **people thin to a trickle** and then vanish altogether. **No man's land**. A dead soldier by the road marks the uneasy frontlines.

The UN is expected to pass through the lines **relatively unhindered**. The UN had spent days negotiating security guarantees from both sides, though the presence of heavily armed peacekeepers in **armoured** vehicles front and rear might also help.

The cars are carrying medical supplies for the hospital in Rutshuru, the convoy's main **destination**, and teams of technical experts whose main job is to find people who've been **sheltering** in camps that are now empty. The aid will have to come later - that is, of course, **provided** the five-day-old ceasefire continues to hold, and that depends on the success of European and African diplomatic initiatives. Late on Sunday there were reports of clashes, **the first hint** that **the current calm** may not necessarily last.

Peter Greste, BBC News, Goma

Vocabulary and definitions

choked with	full of, crowded with
people thin to a trickle	there are a lot fewer people
No man's land	the area of land between two opposing armies that isn't held by either side
relatively unhindered	with few difficulties and/or obstacles, compared to what it could be like
armoured	protected by strong covering
destination	the place where someone is supposed to arrive
sheltering	protecting themselves, finding cover (e.g. from the rain)
provided	if, on condition that, as long as
the first hint	the first suggestion/indication
the current calm	here, the ceasefire that is now in force

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/11/081103_congo.shtml